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ABSTRACT

A study examined the educational orientation of Nigerian adult learners to test the assumptions that there would be no difference in their reasons for engaging in educational activities and that there would be no difference between male and female Nigerian adult learners as to their educational orientations. Six hundred male and female adults engaged in different educational activities in both basic and advanced education institutions were randomly selected from a population of 1,000 and were administered the "Reason for Educational Participation Scale Questionnaire" developed by Burges in 1971. Usable responses were received from 265 males and 248 females. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation was used to analyze the data to identify statistical differences. The findings from the study suggest that Nigerian adult learners engage in educational activities mainly for economic needs, self-development needs, social needs, and acquisition of credentials. Males and females had similar educational orientations. (Brief mention is made of the use of the data in program development. Sixteen references are listed.) (NLL)

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EDUCATIONAL ORIENTATION OF NIGERIAN ADULT LEARNERS

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Abstract

The study examined the education orientation of Nigerian Adult learners. Six hundred male and female adults engaged in different educational activities were selected from public and private educational institutions as samples. Burges' "Reasons for Educational Participation Scale Questionnaire" (REPSQ) was used for data collection. The Spearman rank order correlation was employed for data analysis. The study revealed that Nigerian adult learners engage in educational activities mainly for economin, social, self-development, and acquisition of credentials. Male and female Nigerian adults had similar educational orientations as revealed by the study (rho = 0.867, $p = .05$).

EDUCATIONAL ORIENTATION OF NIGERIAN ADULT LEARNERS

Introduction

Factors that motivate adults to participate in educational activities will continue to be a point of interest in adult education programming. Cross (1981) asserts that "... the answer to the question of of why adults participate in learning activities will probably never be answered by any simple formular".

One of the problems of early educational ignorance of the Nigerian adults was the inability of the providers to probe or conduct a periodical survey of the interests and motives of the participants for engaging in learning activities. Observations show that programs were based on what the providers thought the participants ought to know. Knowles, (1980) warns that a programme that is entirely planned by the staff on the basis of what the staff thinks people ought to be interested in, without conducting periodical surveys of the needs and interests of the people the programme seeks to serve, will be rather pathetic.

In any educational activities or programmes, needs assessment and motivation to learn are likened to twins that should not be separated from one another. They are indispensable to each other in education programming. Knowles, (1980) further gives credence that in order to achieve the highest level of individual motivation, it is imperative that the specific learning needs of the participants of a given learning aotivity be investigated. Smith, (1982) opines

that adult education is the most evolutionary area in education today. It is growing interms of student participation and in the number and types of providers. The growth according to Smith (1982), is at increasing rate, a rate never anticipated by most of our researchers in the last decade.

The educational orientation of Nigerian adults has further been dented by the inability of the providers and policy makers to adequately tackle the myriad problems militating against productive adult education programmes in Nigeria. Omolewa (1981), attests that perhaps if the government was convinced about the place of literacy in development, it would have done more than pay lip services to the adult education programmes.

Every participant in any educational activity have motives and goals that differ from other participants. Houle (1961), in his typology, bases adult learning orientation on three categories; that of learning for the sake of learning; that of goal oriented; and activity oriented. Motivation and programme design for adult education should be seen as indispensable tools for effectiveness of adult education programming. The study of Nigerian adults' motivation to learn has long been overdue. Their educational orientation at this crucial period of structural economic adjustment and national development should not be underestimated.

A review of the literature indicates that there has not been any investigation or study done on the educational orientation of Nigerian adults. There has not been a thorough investigation of participants' motivations and interests for engaging in educational activities.

Landry, (1971) declares that most adult educational personnel do not have a very systematic or thorough picture of participants' motivations and interests for engaging in learning activities. Even the administrators and other personnel in the programmes are unaware of the true range and percentage of different motivations partly because of inadequate record of study or they are too far removed from the participants.

This study therefore seeks to examine and determine the extent of educational orientations of Nigerian adults through a case study of some selected Nigerian adult population.

Assumption

1. It was assumed that there would be no difference in the educational orientations of Nigerian adult learners.
2. That both male and female Nigerian adult learners would have no difference in their educational orientations.

Synthesis of Literature

Houle (1961), declares, that the desire to learn like every other human characteristics is not shared equally by everyone. Adults engage in learning activities for a variety of reasons. A growing body of research and study suggest that the trend of educational orientation of adults will continue to grow faster than the growth rate of adult population (Cross, 1979).

The reason according to Cross (1979), is due to complex interweaving of factors. Factors that are both social and economic, and which include demography of birth place and rate. Evidence shows that there are more adults in the population of any country today than ever before. This as may be suggested, could be responsible for the trend of educational participation of adults in Nigeria. Aderinto (1983), shows that many Nigerian adults are returning to schools or engaging themselves in educational activities for different reasons, among which may be the requirement for new knowledge and skills, rising educational levels, and demand for more sophisticated level of education.

Douglah, (1970) asserts that all people have some basic needs which they must satisfy, therefore, they tend to be attracted towards and feel more involved in activities which they see as having good chances of satisfying their needs. Coolie and Newberry, (1958) view orientation of adult in educational activities both in general and in an organized adult education as that of socio-economic factors and the desire for job advancement.

Tough, (1971) in a study showed that a typical adult person would conduct or undertake about eight learning projects in one year. His study showed that 98% of the 66 interviewees participated in one kind of learning project or the other. The individual time spent on these learning projects averaged 816 hours and median of 687. Tough's study further showed that many learning orientations are initiated for practical reasons, decision making, skills, sports, and home family. Adults participate in learning activities for upgrading job or occupa-

tion, personal and home responsibilities, self-improvement and competence, and for interest or leisure.

Adult educational orientation may not be the same all over the world. Studies have shown that people participate in educational activities for various reasons. Robinson (1965), explored the range of adult interest in educational activities in England, and found that adults in England participated in learning activities for personal and pratical needs of everyday life. People, according to Robinson, do not at some stage decide that they would like to know more about economics or psychology; they are concerned about how much it will cost them to redecorate their homes or why their children behave in the way they do.

Dumazedier, (1967) conducted a survey in France on adults education al interests. The finding revealed that adults in France put more emphasis on practical and technical application of knowledge. Adults in France were more concerned about skills for their vocations. The preferred topics, according to Dumazedier, are connected to utilitarian pre-occupations, answering a need for information about matter affecting daily life.

Sheffield, (1962) indentified five meaningful components of educational orientation of adults and named them as follows:

1. Learning orientation - those seeking knowledge for its own sake.
2. Desire - activity orientation - those taking part because of the activity alone, and because in the circumstances of the learning,

interpersonal or sociological meaning is found which may have no necessary connection at all with the content of the annunced perpose of the activity.

3. Societal -goal orientation - those participating in education to accomplish clear-cut social and community objectives.
4. Personal-goal orientation - those participating in education to accomplish fairly clear-cut personal objectives.
5. Need-activity orientation - those participating or taking part because in the circumstances or learning, an introppective or interpersonal meaning is found which may have no necessary connection, and often no connection at all with the announced purpose of the activity.

Boshier (1970), tested Houle's typology of "Motivational Orientation" in a New Zealand context to further explore Houle's typology of Motivational Orientation and its applicability in the New Zealand setting with a wide range of respondents. Fourteen factors were identified as factors that influenced adults to participate in educational activities. Among these were socially oriented, job oriented, learning oriented, and self-development oriented factors. Boshier concludes that it was obvious that adults undertake learning activities for a plethora of reasons and that in studying adult learners, what is needed is a holistic approach embeded in sound theory.

In summary, it could therefore be established from the review of literature on adults' participation in educational activities that the educational orientation of adults in general is that of social, economic,

self-development, religious and self-improvement.

Sample and Methodology

In order to accomplish the purpose for which the study was intended, 600 male and female adults engaged in different educational activities in both basic educational and advance educational institutions were randomly selected from a population of 1000.

The "Reason for Educational Participation Scale Questionnaire" (REPSQ) developed by Burges (1971) was used for the study. The "Reason for Educational Participation Questionnaire" provided the major sources of information with regard to the purpose of the study, which was to examine and identify the educational orientation of Nigerian adults. Two kind of reliability tests were used to determine the content validity and reliability of the instrument by the author, and found appropriate for this study: (1) the coefficient of stability which averaged .665 for the entire group, and (2) the coefficient of equivalence which was .885 for the entire instrument. The author's validation of the instrument made it readily acceptable for use in this study.

The questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher to 600 (male and female) adult learners in selected institutions of learning in Nigeria to facilitate a fair percentage of returns. A total of 513 questionnaires (85.5%) were completed and returned and considered usable for the study (see Table I).

Analysis of Data

Since this study is descriptive in nature, a statistical test which is descriptive was employed for the analysis of data. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation was used to this effect, and for determining the relationship that existed between the participants' responses to the "Reason for Educational Participation Scale". The mean for each item on the Scale was calculated, ranked, and compared for the selected independent variables. A level of significance of .05 was set for the rejections of the null hypotheses. Ten factors that had the highest means on "Reason for Educational Participation Scale" were viewed as being important in determining the educational orientation of adult learners in Nigeria.

Table I

Population, Sample, and The Percentage of Responses

Respondents	Population	Sample	Usable Responses	% of Usable Responses
Male	500	300	265	88.3
Female	500	300	248	82.6
Total	1000	600	513	85.5

Findings

Table II presents the Spearman Rank Order Correlations between responses given by respondents to the reasons for educational participation statements as ranked by male and female adult learners. Only

10 out of the 22 items with highest means rank-ordered were used for the purpose of analysis.

As data in table II indicated, there was considerable agreement in the educational orientation between male and female adult learners in their responses to the reasons for engaging in educational activities and on those factors considered to be important and the most important factors that influenced or determined adult learners' participation in educational activities. As data revealed, both male and female adult learners in Nigeria agreed on the reasons for educational participation statements 7, 68, 24, 30, and 35 as factors considered most important in their educational orientations. These factors attracted equal ranking from the respondents. Other factors, for example, items number 24, 31, 39, 43, 45, and 3, were ranked differently by the respondents, but also attracted higher means, thus making them to be among the ten factors with the highest means in the orientation of adult learners.

As earlier stated in this study, it was assumed by the researcher that there would be no difference in the responses given by the respondents as regard their educational orientations. This assumption was tested by computing the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient to determine the degree of relationship, and the significance of relationship between the sex. The rho value (.867) obtained at .05 level of significance showed that there were statistically significant positive order correlation coefficient betwee male and

Table II

Educational Orientation of Adult Learners

Item NO	Statements	SEX Male $\bar{x}$	SEX Rank	SEX Female $\bar{x}$	SEX Rank	Differences Between Ranks	d^2
7	To seek relief from economic pressures of life	+4.49	1	+4.43	1	0	0
68	To earn a degree certificate, or diploma	+4.44	2	+4.27	2	0	0
24	To fulfill a personal motivation to get ahead	+4.30	3	+4.23	3	0	0
30	To keep up-to-date with new technology in my occupation	+4.09	4	+4.08	4	0	0
31	To become a better informed person	+4.00	5	+3.63	9	4	16
35	To maintain or improve my social position	+3.93	6	+3.82	6	0	0
39	To upgrade my personal competency	+3.84	7	+3.86	5	2	4
43	To meet the educational requirements of our era	+3.78	8	+3.77	7	1	1
45	To keep up with others	+3.72	9	+3.76	8	1	1
3	To gain insight into myself as a person	+3.53	10	+3.62	10	0	0

Sum of d^2 = 22

rho = .867

p = .05 for N = 10

female adult learners in Nigeria. The assumption number 2, that both male and female Nigerian adult learners would have no difference in their educational orientations was therefore retained (rho = .867, p = .05). With this findings, the assumption number 1, which also stated that there would be no difference in the educational orientations of Nigerian adult learners was retained. As Table II revealed, there are similarities in the rankings of the items considered most important to the educational orientation of the respondents.

Conclusion and Implications

The findings from the study suggest a positive relationship in the educational orientation of Nigerian adult learners. Female adult learners engaged in educational activities for similar reasons as those of males. Mostly, adult learners in Nigeria engage in educational activities for both economic and non-economic reasons. Four categories emerged as basic educational orientation of Nigerian adult learners in the study. These were: (1) Economic needs; (2) Self-development; (3) Social needs; and (4) Acquisition of credentials.

The typology of educational orientation of adult learners in Nigeria as revealed in this study is an indicative of the need for educational administrators, teachers, curriculum planners, education counselors, private and public education proprietors to recognize that adult learners in Nigeria percieved education as an aid to a better future, economic and self-improvements. These educational orientations as presented in this study should be used in the allo-

cation of resources, programme planning, and decision making process concerning adult education in Nigeria.

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